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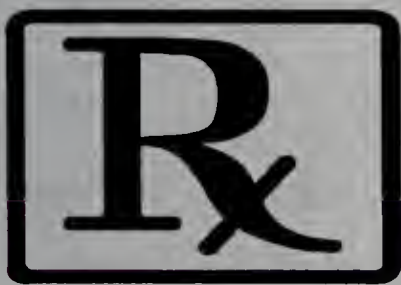
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Help With Your Medication



**Illinois Department
on Aging**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



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Jim Edgar
Governor
State of Illinois

Maralee I. Lindley
Director
Department on Aging

Today, many people -- particularly older people -- may be under the care of more than one physician. If you see more than one doctor, it is **a good idea to seek professional help to monitor the prescription and non-prescription medications you take.** Here are a few suggestions to help you manage your health, with help from your physicians and pharmacists.

If you see more than one physician tell EACH one about ALL the medications you take. (Bring your medications with you to show your physicians.)

Use the same pharmacy for all your medication purchases so your records are in one place.

Talk to your pharmacist. You are entitled to personal counseling from your pharmacist about the prescription and over-the-counter medications you take. The Illinois Pharmacy Foundation suggests you ask your pharmacist if you have questions about your medications such as:

- What is the name of this drug?
- What is the medication for?
- How should I take it?

- How long should I take it?
- What improvement should I expect after taking this drug?
- Are there any likely side effects?
- Are there any foods, activities, or other drugs I should avoid while taking this medicine?

Talk to your physician and pharmacist about what to expect from a medication.

Older adults cannot absorb some medications as well as when they were younger. Medication can accumulate in the kidneys, liver, other organs or body fat if it is too concentrated for your size, age and condition.

Over-the-counter medications:

- Is this the right medication for my illness?
- Will this interact with the other medications I am taking?

To prevent a drug interaction, have one physician, preferably your family physician, review **ALL** your prescription medications, over-the-counter drugs (*vitamins, aspirin, cough syrup, antacids, allergy/sinus medications, laxatives, creams, ointments, eye drops, nose sprays, just to name a few*)

and diet supplements. Your physician will ask if you are **allergic to any medications.**

Your physician will tell you how and when to take your medication:

- Take your medication at the exact time written on the prescription label and follow the instructions, such as, *"Take with food," "Shake well," "Keep refrigerated."*
- Read the "special instructions stickers" on your prescription bottle.
- Do not take another persons medication or give yours to someone else.
- Drink lots of liquids or extra water if advised.

Medications are not fully effective unless you comply with the specific instructions.

There may be side effects.

- Some medications may make you sleepy or drowsy; therefore, you should not drive a car or operate machinery. A special label may be on the medication as a warning.
- Your appetite may increase or decrease.
- The color of your urine may

change while you take certain medications.

- It may be especially important not to drink alcohol.
- Your skin may be very sensitive to sun exposure, and you may need to stay out of direct sun or wear sunblock.
- Talk to the physician or pharmacist if your stomach becomes upset. There may be a way to prevent this.

Finish taking all your medication(s), even if you feel better. Antibiotics are taken for infections. Infections can return if all the antibiotics are not taken.

Some medications must be taken daily, not just when symptoms occur. Medication for depression or anxiety must be taken daily, even when you feel better.

Call your physician at once if you:

- have side-effects you did not expect;
- feel worse after taking the medication;
- feel confused or forgetful;
- have hearing changes, ringing, or buzzing;
- feel dizzy or faint;
- cannot see clearly (blurred vision);

- feel too happy or too sad (mood swings) or are afraid (anxiety);
- develop skin rash, itching, bumps;
- have nausea, diarrhea, constipation or problems urinating;
- have trouble sleeping.

**Store your
medication properly:**

- Refrigerate if necessary
- Keep from extreme heat or cold
- Throw away old medications

**Chicago Department on Aging
Information and Assistance
312/744-4016
Spanish Speaking**

**The Illinois
Department on Aging's
toll-free Senior HelpLine:
1-800-252-8966
(Voice and TDD)**

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